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AUTHOR Ooms, Theodora; Owen, Todd

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ABSTRACT

This report presents highlights of a seminar which focused on encouraging paternal financial responsibility. Comments by these speakers are summarized: Pamela Holcomb, a research associate at the Urban Institute; Esther Wattenberg, a professor at the School of Social Work and research fellow at the University of Minnesota; Bernardine Watson, director of the Individual and Family Support Unit, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), Philadelphia; and Fred Doolittle, assistant director of research, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York. These topics, discussed at the seminar, are summarized: (1) the variety of organizations involved in paternity establishment practices; (2) local paternity establishment practices; (3) innovative practices and barriers; (4) barriers to effective paternity establishment; (5) public education and outreach; (6) results of a study of young unwed parents; (7) a site employment and training program designed to offer young fathers a variety of services to help them to fulfill their financial and other parenting responsibilities; and (8) a project whose goal was to test new ways to increase the earnings of unwed/non-custodial parents and to have that translate into increased support for children. A background report is also included which defines terms and discusses trends in out-of-wedlock births; paternity establishment; characteristics of unwed fathers; employment and responsibility of unwed fathers; policy goals and dilemmas; and promising strategies. A reference list of 48 items is included. (ABL)

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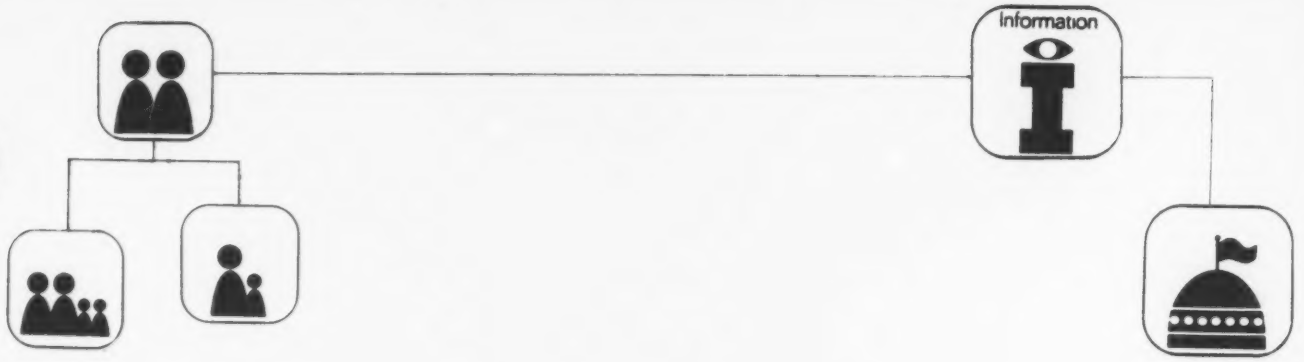

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Encouraging Unwed Fathers to Be Responsible: Paternity Establishment, Child Support and JOBS Strategies

November 16, 1990, 210 Cannon House Office Building

Panelists: **Esther Wattenberg,** professor, School of Social Work and research fellow, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota
Pamela Holcomb, research associate, Urban Institute
Bernardine Watson, director, Individual and Family Support Unit, Public/Private Ventures
Fred Doolittle, Ph.D., assistant director of research, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation N.Y.

Moderator: **Theodora Ooms,** director, Family Impact Seminar

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Background Briefing Report.....pages 1 to 27

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Encouraging Unwed Fathers to Be Responsible: Paternity Establishment, Child Support and JOBS Strategies

Background Briefing Report
and
Meeting Highlights

by

Theodora Ooms and Todd Owen

This policy seminar is one in a series of monthly seminars for policy staff titled, *Family Centered Social Policy: The Emerging Agenda*, conducted by the **Family Impact Seminar**, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Research and Education Foundation, 1100 Seventeenth Street, N.W., The Tenth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202/467-5114

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Encouraging Unwed Fathers To Be Responsible:

Paternity Establishment, Child Support and JOBS Strategies

Highlights of the seminar meeting held on November 16, 1990 in Cannon House Office Building, Room 210 (a supplement to the background briefing report).

Encouraging paternal financial responsibility is now a declared goal of public policy. However, it is only recently that the attention has broadened to include unwed fathers in this goal as well as divorced and separated fathers. Statistics on the dramatic growth in their numbers partly accounts for this new interest explained **Theodora Ooms**, the moderator. More than half of children on AFDC, about one in five of all children and two out of every three black children are born out-of-wedlock. Of these, less than a quarter have paternity legally established and even fewer unwed fathers pay child support. The panelists were asked to try to explain this situation, discuss societal expectations of unwed fathers, describe the goals and current points of intervention (see Table I, p. 27) and emerging policy options.

The first speaker, **Pamela Holcomb**, is a research associate at the Urban Institute. Holcomb began by relating some preliminary findings from the first national survey of local paternity establishment practices which was funded by Ford Foundation and ASPE/DHHS. The goal of the survey was to fill in the current vacuum of information and obtain a picture of paternity establishment practices currently being used by local child support agencies and to determine what factors or practices are associated with higher paternity establishment rates.

The survey consisted of a combination of semi-structured telephone interviews and mail questionnaires involving 250 counties in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Holcomb said that the preliminary findings she would use were based on a return rate of 58% but a forthcoming, final analysis will be based on a substantially higher response rate.

Diverse organizational actors. Holcomb pointed out that at the state and local level there is a wide variety of organizations involved and hence a wide range of paternity establishment practices exist in localities across the country. The overall child support enforcement programs are typically housed within a separate unit of the human services/welfare agency. On the other hand, paternity establishment functions are usually carried out in a legal setting, reflecting the historical legacy of bastardy proceedings being a criminal action. In fact, Holcomb added, two-thirds of the child support (IV-D) programs in the sample have cooperative agreements or contracts with a legal agency to carry out all or some aspects of paternity establishment. In some jurisdictions this is only in contested cases, but in others for all cases. These agencies include the District Attorney's office, State Attorney's office, legal aid society, bar association, or private attorneys. The remaining third of the IV-D agencies use in-house legal staff.

Courts are another major actor in paternity establishment. There is considerable variation from state to state, and between counties in a state, in the amount of judicial action required for paternity establishment. This can range from requiring that the alleged father and mother appear before a judge in all paternity cases; having only cases where the alleged father will not voluntarily consent to paternity appear before a judge; having a majority of cases resolved before quasi-judicial staffs;

and having virtually no court involvement and establishing the vast majority of cases through an administrative process.

In many localities, successful paternity establishment requires the interconnection of actions across a number of agencies, which can create delays in case processing and difficulty in case tracking. A never-married mother applying for AFDC will end up being a client in the welfare division, the child support division, the county attorney's office and be expected to make court appearances and go to a lab for genetic testing as her case winds through the system.

Local Paternity Establishment Procedures. To illustrate the diversity of practices, Holcomb then briefly contrasted two paternity establishment systems in two states. In Oklahoma, localities were described as having an essentially adversarial court paternity establishment process. In most areas the state has contracts with the local D.A.'s offices to handle child support. In one locality the mother is interviewed by staff and once the alleged father is found, the case is filed in district court. He is served with a paternity allegation and is given a court date. He must appear for a court date even if he wishes to acknowledge paternity. In court he either consents to or denies paternity. If he denies, the judge orders blood tests which are administered in the D.A.'s office. The putative father is given the opportunity to respond to the results of the blood test at the second court appearance at which time the case is formally adjudicated.

In Connecticut, by contrast, most child support offices use a paternity establishment process which encourages voluntary consent by the alleged father with the court serving only as the last resort. In this locality once the mother is interviewed and the alleged father located, he is sent a letter explaining the allegation and his options and asking him to make an appointment to discuss the matter. He is given 10 days to respond. If he admits paternity the case is closed. If he does not respond, the case is filed, the court date set and the alleged father is served a summons to appear. He and the mother appear before a court magistrate where he can consent and establish paternity. If he denies, blood tests are ordered. Based on the results, a second court appearance is held, at which point paternity is established.

It is generally believed that paternity establishment rates are higher when alleged fathers are encouraged to consent voluntarily. Overall, offices reported in the survey that one-third of paternities were established voluntarily, before genetic testing. One-fifth were established after genetic tests but before court appearances. A quarter were established in court and one-eighth were established by default when the alleged father failed to respond to the allegation.

Innovative Practices and Barriers. Holcomb then discussed some innovative practices designed both to expedite the process of paternity establishment and encourage cooperation.

---Some offices reported interviewing mothers in a group. While this can increase the number of interviews, it has been criticized for a lack of privacy as well as the belief that the mother would be less forthcoming with information under these circumstances.

---Based on the belief that fathers are more likely to acknowledge paternity sooner rather than later after the child's birth, there are some new efforts in several states, such as in Washington, to allow the unwed father a chance to acknowledge paternity right at the hospital. This is considered a legally binding agreement, although in Washington the father can ask for blood tests at a later date.

---Several jurisdictions have initiated the use of on-site blood testing in order to eliminate the delay between the request for a test and the actual drawing of blood.

---In localities which require court appearances, some are holding mass hearings for alleged fathers, where they are told their rights and options and given the opportunity to consent or deny paternity. (These may be followed by on-site blood-testing.)

Barriers to effective paternity establishment. According to Holcomb the two most common barriers to paternity establishment cited in the survey were uncooperative custodial parents and difficulty locating the alleged father. Almost two-thirds identified locating the father as where the greatest number of cases were held up in the system. Despite the common perception that courts are the primary cause for delay, only between 10% and 15% of the respondents felt the courts were where the most cases were hung up. Another commonly cited barrier was that there is not enough staff to handle all the cases.

Most respondents thought the primary barriers occurred long before the courts got involved. Uncooperative mothers make finding the alleged father quite difficult. And many mothers in child support enforcement programs come through the AFDC door and can be reluctant child support clients.

Public education and outreach. This is one strategy, designed to gain the young parents cooperation and allay some of the fears and misconceptions, that some localities were using. Yet in the survey less than 50% of IV-D offices reported any public education activities; only 10% reported outreach to hospitals and maternity wards, 6% to pre-natal care units, and one-third to teen pregnancy and parenting programs.

Holcomb concluded by stating that based on the survey responses it appears that some of the recent efforts to expedite paternity establishment have been successful. Nevertheless, it was the view of their research team that in addition to thinking about streamlining procedures to make the process more efficient, "more attention and staff time need to be directed to some of the problems of uncooperative parents and locating alleged fathers if we are to see paternity establishment rates increase to their full potential."

Esther Wattenberg, the next panelist, is professor at the School of Social Work and research fellow, at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota. She drew on her extensive research in Minnesota with unwed parents and social service providers to explore attitudes and barriers to paternity establishment and suggested needed policy directions.

According to Wattenberg paternity adjudication has reached a new stage, with increasing numbers of people studying the fastest growing type of family formation in the U.S., unmarried parents with out-of-wedlock children. This group is escalating across all ages of child-bearing women, only one-third are teenagers, the group she and her colleagues have studied.

After citing some of the statistics, Wattenberg opened her remarks by saying the central question in her view was "How do you protect the long-term interest of these growing numbers of out-of-wedlock children?" The answers were complex since this is clearly an area of contending interests. The state/government wants the money that may be available from unmarried fathers. The child's parents often have opposing interests, and their interests are not always consistent with that of the child. Then there are the grandparents, other relatives and an array of social service and community systems each with a variety of views and interests in the issue.

Study of Young Unwed Parents. In past studies of paternity establishment there has been a focus on procedural and administrative reform. While these are important, remarkably absent from earlier studies was an examination of the reasons why young people choose whether or not to declare paternity. A grant from the Ford Foundation enabled Wattenberg and two colleagues to look at this question more closely.

In their recently completed study they conducted intensive two and a half hour interviews with both the unwed teenage mothers and young fathers, the first major study to collect data from the unwed

"dyad." The parents were selected from a pool of Hennipin County, Minnesota AFDC recipients and interviewed by same race, same gender graduate students. The mothers were all 21 or younger with a child under one year old. Approximately 37% of the paired couples were black, 37% were white and 25% were interracial relationships.

The data from these interviews is in process of being analyzed. However Wattenberg proceeded to share some initial highlights of the preliminary findings. (For final results see Wattenberg, et al. forthcoming in 1991.)

---They are a highly mobile group, half to two-thirds have moved twice in the last six months. Hence it is not surprising, she added, that it is hard for IV-D agencies to locate the fathers.
---These children are not a product of casual encounters, most of the couples had an ongoing relationship and 70% had tried living together for a while. Only 28% of the mothers were living with the father of their child at the time of the interview.
---These young people came from very troubled family situations where running away, drug and alcohol abuse and physical abuse were common.
---The young mothers, especially the black mothers, developed a network of social and supportive relationships with their own family and friends after the baby's birth, but this rarely intersected with the baby's father's network of relationships.
---Confirming the results of others' studies, the unwed white fathers are more disconnected, dissociated, and in fact in greater trouble in a social way than the black fathers.
---One in five white men had fathered more than one child and for black men it was one in two. There was a small group of "roving inseminators" one of whom had fathered eight children by eight different mothers.
---Most of the unwed mothers believed that in five years they would be married but not to the father of their child. A small group of white women thought they would be married to the father.
---It was important to many of the young parents that the father's name be on the child's birth certificate.

Wattenberg added that the survey result the researcher found most interesting and that has important policy implications was in nearly all cases giving birth was clearly not considered as a 'fatal error' but as a positive event which had brought benefits for them and their families (of origin). Many of the young men and women described the birth of the child as a therapeutic event which served to help them get their lives in order. Others described it almost as an act of 'altruism' for the family. A birth would often serve as a means of bringing together families who were experiencing troubled lives otherwise. (It was striking how many described having the fathers, several friends and family members present in the delivery room!)

Although "we do not fully understand the meaning of this finding," said Wattenberg, "it is clear that it is linked with the high rates of repeat pregnancies in this study" (and perhaps in other studies with similar findings of high repeat pregnancies). In fact, one-third of white mothers and half of black mothers in this study had two or more children at the time of the interview. And 14% of the black and 8% of the white mothers were pregnant at the follow up interview a year later.

Wattenberg suggested, in conclusion, that we follow three broad recommendations for policy development in this area:

- Let the fathers identity be known to all out-of-wedlock children. "It is my assumption that every child is owed a father." This is partly because equal protection laws for marital and non-marital children now make it possible for these children to receive social security and armed forces benefits, workmen's compensation, and inheritance if a legal link is made between the father and his child.

To help guarantee that the father's identity is known to the child, Wattenberg proposed that the declaration of parentage, which can be easily obtained at the time of birth in hospital, be separated out from the tangled web of child support, visitation and custody issues. It should be treated much as marriage is, the wedding ceremony is quite separate from enforcing marital obligations.

- Decriminalize the whole system because it is very frightening and intimidating to young people.
- Establish a national standardized procedure for paternity establishment. There should be a way of monitoring, at the hospital for example, whether or not every set of unmarried parents are offered the chance to sign a declaration of parentage.

The next speaker was **Bernardine Watson**, director of the Individual and Family Support Unit, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) in Philadelphia. She was asked to outline the central features of the Young Unwed Fathers Demonstration, funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, which is a new six site employment and training program designed to offer young fathers a variety of services to help them fulfill their financial and other parenting responsibilities.

Background of the project. This project has been in the planning stages for two years and follows upon P/PV's work and explorations in the area of teen pregnancy and parenting. They discovered that very few programs existed for young fathers. These were poorly funded and weren't tied in with the existing employment and training programs. There was little research on unwed fathers, but what was found showed they had many of the same difficulties as young mothers, such as being prone to drop out of high school and therefore tended to be underemployed and undereducated. In looking through some ethnographic research they found that most young men started out willing to support their children but were unprepared economically, psychologically, and socially to take on the responsibilities of being parents.

During the planning of the program P/PV kept in mind two public policy initiatives which would affect this population. One was the Family Support Act, with its increased emphasis on child support collections. The other involved growing criticism of the JTPA system because of its lack of targeting high-risk populations and its poor service to unmarried males. P/PV decided to design a project in which they would work with communities across the country to help them organize public and private resources to design strategies for working with young unwed fathers. In this project the programs were to provide the following key elements.

--Quality training and education to the fathers through the JTPA system which would give them priority for programs often reserved for older white males, such as on-the-job training opportunities.

--Access to good job opportunities within the community.

--Fatherhood development activities, centered around P/PV's Fatherhood Curriculum, which is designed to increase parenting values and skills, encourage personal development and foster responsible payment of child support .

--Sites must maintain contact with young fathers over an 18 month period even after they have entered employment.

Project Diversity. Watson said that P/PV decided to test more than one model because there wasn't enough known about young unwed fathers to design a single strategy. From a wide range of possible applicants they chose six communities to work with and allowed them considerable

local flexibility on how these services would be provided, although they needed to meet several core requirements (for further details see pages 20-21).

The programs will focus on young men between 16 and 25, JTPA eligible, and who are fathers or expectant fathers. Each site will serve 50 fathers. Each site was given $50,000 in seed money from P/PV and the rest of the funding will come from local JTPA organizations and local funding sources.

In selecting the sites P/PV wanted geographic diversity; established organizations with ties into existing systems and experience working with high-risk populations; and organizations that would provide a variety of service delivery approaches and improvement strategies. They selected two community-based organizations that will be offering all services in-house; two community broker agencies that will subcontract out most of the services; and two private industry councils, one which will deliver all the services themselves and one which will subcontract out services.

A variety of strategies will be used. Two will work with child support enforcement offices and the young men will be mandated to participate in the program. One will take referrals from child support enforcement on a voluntary basis. The other three will be doing general outreach in the community, working with hospitals and other agencies that serve young mothers, recruiting young men off the streets and going door to door.

Project evaluation. The research to be conducted on this project will include a close look at implementation strategies at all six sites, specifically focusing on recruitment strategies, inter-agency initiatives, how the fatherhood development curriculum that P/PV designed will be received by the fathers, and how other services are utilized by the young fathers. It will assess employment outcomes for the participants and project costs and funding strategies. An ethnographic study will look closely at the lives of these young fathers, their motivations and their feelings about becoming fathers.

Watson said in conclusion that P/PV is in the final stages of design and development of the program with all six sites expected to be participating by early 1991. The projects will operate for 18 months, during which P/PV will try to identify what model or parts of models are worthy of a more intense test. A year into the project they will look for a model on which to design a larger demonstration, including an impact analysis using random assignment.

Fred Doolittle, the final panelist, is the assistant director of research, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, N.Y. He was asked to describe some of the initial issues, dilemmas and research questions involved in planning the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration (PFSD). Doolittle explained that the PFSD is a new collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Ford Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust. Its goal is to test new ways to increase the earnings of unwed/non-custodial parents and to have that translate into increased support for their children. The project will focus on AFDC families because a provision in the Family Support Act authorizes a special waiver to allow five states to use JOBS funds for services to non-custodial parents of children who are receiving AFDC.

Policy Problems/Challenges. Doolittle said there are two basic situations the PFSD is planning to address, each presenting a uniquely complex set of policy problems, disincentives and challenges.

The first are situations like those the P/PV demonstration is addressing although with a wider range of parental ages These concern mothers and fathers where paternity is not yet established, the father is low-skilled and unemployed and the mother is receiving AFDC. Historically, from the perspective of the child support agencies, in these family situations it may not be worth the effort to

establish paternity and child support obligations because in the short run there is little chance of collections as a result of the fathers low-skills and lack of earning potential. And the mother and father also have few incentives to cooperate. However, as Wattenberg noted, there may be a larger, longer term societal interest in establishing paternity both to be eligible for potential benefits and because these fathers may mature and establish solid work patterns, and become willing and able to pay child support.

The programs established to respond to these types of situations, and in which participation is voluntary, have had a social services orientation creating employment, training and support services but the link to child support enforcement has typically been weak.

The second situation presents a challenge to legal enforcement. A judge or child support official has a father before them, for whom paternity has been established (and who is often a divorced or separated father) who has built up considerable arrears by not paying support. He says he can't pay because he is unemployed or too poor. It is difficult for the judge to determine if he has the money and won't pay, if he is paying under the table or if he truly does not have the money. Typically judges or child support agencies have only had two options to deal with these types of cases---the threat or imposition of jail, or to give up because they don't have the enforcement tools or programmatic response to figure out if the father is telling the truth.

More recently Washington, D.C., P.G. County, Florida and some other jurisdictions have responded by making participation in employment and training and other services mandatory (and an explicit alternative to jail). The goal is to try to increase the earnings of the non-custodial parent and link it closely with the obligation to pay child support.

There has been a variety of responses in the jurisdictions that have tried this second strategy. Some of the fathers turn out to be employed after all and start paying child support instead of going through the program (some call this the "smoke-out" factor). In these cases there is an immediate impact on child support collections. In other situations the young fathers do enroll in and benefit from the training and employment assistance.

Disincentives for Participation. A programmatic response to both these two problems can be difficult to implement. This, Doolittle pointed out, can best be understood by examining the disincentives to agencies to mount or cooperate with these innovative programs and to the unwed father and mother to participate in them that need to be overcome.

---The child support administration, with respect to AFDC cases, has tended to focus their limited enforcement and administrative resources on cases where there is a likely pay off in the short run. Thus they have a disincentive to target these cases.

---AFDC mothers get only the first $50 dollars of child support a month. So if a father is paying her more than $50 under the table/outside the system, it would be to her financial disadvantage to cooperate with the child support agency. And to some mothers, who have a bad relationship with the baby's father, the $50 may not be worth having to allow the father into their lives. They have a disincentive to cooperate with IV-D in naming and locating the father.

---The young fathers nowadays only have a couple of options. They can live and work in the mainstream economy, acknowledge their legal obligations and cooperate with the child support system to make their payments. The other option is to move "underground," working jobs off the books, frequently changing jobs, paying no taxes, etc.

Until recently the fathers typically could live in a 'grey' area between these options. They lived and worked in the mainstream economy and attempted to avoid their legal obligations, but it is getting more and more difficult to get away with this because of increased enforcement.

MDRC is trying to meet the design challenges these problems pose. In addition to building on the experience of some existing innovative programs of both types---both those which have typically emerged out of the court system and others from voluntary programs---MRDC has conducted a number of focus groups with non-custodial fathers who aren't paying child support. The goal of these focus groups is to understand how they see their obligations as fathers and what kind of programs might be attractive to them.

Program Guidelines. From these activities MDRC has developed some initial program guidelines for the demonstration project which includes four key elements.

---Employment and training services for non-custodial fathers to increase their skills and earning capacity. The traditional training/education option is not very attractive to the fathers who suggested that what they wanted was on-the-job training, access to apprenticeships, job search assistance and work experience. These are what MRDC has in mind that the sites should offer.

---The second element is to have the fathers' increase in earning capacity translate into an increased sense of responsibility to the family. Through some kind of parenting curriculum the project sites should provide these men with the chance to think through what they see as their responsibility as fathers, and to provide them with some basic information on how the child support system works and their responsibilities and obligations in it. This element is very important because, based on their own experiences as children, many of these men have very negative views of a father's role. MDRC plans to work with P/PV to adapt their parenthood curriculum to be applicable to fathers of a broader age range and to include the issues of divorced and separated fathers.

---The third element tries to address the incentives that the families face so that when you have increased earnings capacity and a sense of responsibility, it is translated into action through the system. This is a more difficult challenge because modifying existing system disincentives---such as having child support paid directly to the mother---would involve altering the fiscal practices and short-run receipts of numerous governmental agencies.

---Fourth, as these men become more involved in the lives of their children and their ex-partner there inevitably arises the potential for conflict between the parents. Thus, the final program component addresses the need to develop mediation services which would be available to these families.

Doolittle pointed out that MRDC, like P/PV, intends there to be a variety in the types of model programs offered among the five funded sites. These could include early intervention services to try to influence paternity establishment through programs offered on a voluntary, social services basis and/or enforcement-based intervention.

The formal request for proposals is expected to be issued in spring of 1991 after further consultation with DHHS and DOL and the Foundation partners. Informally there have been many contacts already with potential applicants. Initially MDRC will issue planning grants to a limited number of sites. Based on their experience five sites will be chosen from these for the demonstration program grants.

MDRC will conduct the project evaluation, initially studying program implementation and how to operate the complicated inter-agency connections that are needed to mesh child support, employment training and some of the other services. Full-blown impact studies will then later be conducted on a smaller number of the sites. Funding will come from the JOBS program, the Child Support Enforcement Program, the Department of Labor, local JTPA agencies and MDRC foundation partners.

As Ooms pointed out, over the next few years we can expect to learn a great deal more about how to enhance paternal responsibility through the eleven demonstration programs together being planned by MDRC and P/PV.

POINTS MADE DURING DISCUSSION

- One participant mentioned several recent administration proposals in the reauthorization of the food stamp program (which were not enacted) including one that would have required custodial parents to cooperate with local child support enforcement agencies as a condition for the custodial parent to receive food stamps.

  Wattenberg added that she was eager to see what will be learned from the demonstration projects about coercive and non-coercive strategies. The parents they interviewed in their study clearly regarded child support enforcement as totally irrelevant to their lives and wanted nothing to do with it. Indeed they became very skilled at evasion strategies. She felt that whatever the logical rationale for a particular policy, it is important to take into consideration the actual attitudes and responses of the people who are going to be affected by it.

  Doolittle commented that they discovered from focus groups that the young men didn't understand the child support support system very well, but many knew that most of what they contributed went to the government, not the mother and child. This greatly affected their views of child support. Moreover, Doolittle pointed out that the implementation of the AFDC requirement of cooperation with child support enforcement varies tremendously among jurisdictions. For example, as a result of litigation in New York, IV-D workers are not allowed to do anything more than ask the mother for the identity of the father.

- A participant from the Family Support Administration (FSA) suggested that non-cooperation of mothers is only one of a number of more basic issues such as the fact that there is no longer any expectation of marriage to the father. Another major problem is effective linkage between the welfare and child support systems. The FSA has tried to encourage IV-A/IV-D interface, and he asked the panelists whether they felt that the underlying notions of the Family Support Act are leading welfare agencies to take the issue of non-cooperation a lot more seriously than has been done in the past.

  Holcomb responded that from their survey it appears that the relationship between AFDC and child support is often adversarial, with each viewing the other as the bad guy. She hasn't seen much effort to improve relations, although there are a few instances of AFDC workers attending court when child support cases are being heard and there is a small amount of cross-training. It is an issue that is gaining recognition but needs more action.

  Ooms asked whether it was true that the critical point in the process was at the point of intake application to AFDC, isn't that when the AFDC eligibility worker first has a chance to educate the child's mother about paternity and child support?

  Holcomb agreed that it was indeed critical. What the AFDC applicants are initially told about child support, and why it might be beneficial to them or their children, whether it is presented in a positive manner, and how quickly referrals are made are all very important in establishing paternity and obtaining child support.

- Doolittle was asked to address questions about the planned research design and what sort of problems were they expecting in doing impact studies and using random assignment. Doolittle stated that a reason for doing the demonstration in several stages is that one can better understand the way the programs are likely to work as well as the scale constraints because

most of the programs are small. They will try to use the pilot phase to see what is a feasible scale and what kind of follow up research they can do.

Watson added that one reason P/PV isn't going to do an impact analysis right away is that there are so many questions about what will attract these men to the programs. It is a difficult population to do random assignment and control groups, until they understand recruitment strategies.

- Wattenberg was asked if they looked at the income or resources of the fathers in her study. She replied that the data on the economic resources of the fathers was rich but had not yet been completely analyzed. However, it was clear that as a group these fathers were low income and had unstable employment patterns. A large portion were receiving general assistance, Medicaid and food stamps.

  Ooms commented that a somewhat different picture of their economic circumstances emerges from a study based on a national sample of unwed fathers, not just the partners of AFDC mothers as in Wattenberg's study. Lerman found from the NLS data that the family income of the majority of unwed fathers who lived with their relatives was twice the family income of unwed mothers.

- Each speaker had alluded to the first year of a child's life as presenting a window of opportunity for establishing paternity. But at the same time, a participant noted, it may be the most difficult year in terms of the financial resources the father has to offer. She asked if anyone knew of programs that used in-kind contributions as a method for a father to establish a record of responsibility early on?

  Wattenberg said that this question brought her back to the need to reframe the whole issue---paternity must be established before thinking about child support. Wattenberg believes we should do all we can to establish the paternity of children early as a separate step from enforcing child support obligations and sorting out visitation and custody issues.

  There are really three central policy questions she continued: How do we facilitate this first vital step? Then how do we enforce child support? and Finally, a question that is seldom asked, as a community, do we expect all unwed fathers to be responsible for their children or only those who become entangled in the AFDC system?

- Ooms then introduced Irma Neal director of D.C. Office of Child Support. to speak to the previous question about in-kind support because of her previous experience in Indianapolis. Neal then described a small program for teen fathers in Marion County, Indiana (the Teen Alternative Parenting Program) that she was involved in, which encouraged payment of "in-kind" support as an incentive for those young fathers to get involved. They would receive credit for child support obligations if they continued their education, attended parenting classes, etc. The details were planned on an individual basis with an in-house counselor. (See page 18.)

  The program started in 1986 and continues today, serving no more than 50 fathers at any one time. Neal explained that in December the D.C. City Council would be considering legislation that separates paternity establishment from child support and makes acknowledgement of paternity equal to paternity establishment. The biggest concern they have faced is the fear that such a plan may violate the due process rights of the father.

  Based on the experience of a similar law in Minnesota, Wattenberg said that it was indeed very important that the fathers be made aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities. In

Minnesota the fathers have three years after the signing of a declaration of parentage within which they can challenge their paternity and ask for blood tests.

Encouraging Unwed Fathers to Be Responsible:

Paternity Establishment, Child Support and JOBS Strategies.

Background Briefing Report

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade policymakers and researchers have been concerned about the persistent poverty of female-headed families and the failure of the large majority of absent fathers to pay child support. Encouraging paternal responsibility is now a declared goal of public policy. Until recently little distinction was made between the different types of single parent households which needed child support. Thus child support enforcement reforms focused largely on increasing payments in divorced and separated families. For the most part, the special circumstances of the never-married were neglected. Yet a large and rapidly growing proportion of female-headed families are formed as a result of non-marital births.

In the mid-eighties policymakers turned their attention to the policy issues involved in unwed parenthood. One out of every five children, two out of three black children and more than half of all the children on AFDC were born out-of-wedlock. Legal paternity is established for only about a quarter of these children, even fewer of these fathers officially, regularly, pay child support. Policies aimed at enforcing or encouraging unwed fathers to live up to their responsibilities face particular challenges and barriers whose complex dimensions are only now beginning to be understood.

Contrary to the popular stereotype, many unwed fathers do care about their children. In a national survey conducted in 1984-85 over half of young absent, unwed fathers reported that they visited their children at least once a week, and 41% reported sometimes paying child support. In addition, they often provide child care and other in-kind assistance. About 20% of young unwed fathers live with their children. About 5% of young black unwed fathers live with their child but not with the child's mother (Lerman, 1986; Lerman and Ooms, 1988).

Paternal responsibility takes on a very different meaning however for a young father who was only involved with the young mother for a few months, weeks or days, whose child does not bear his name and whom he may have only seen once or twice, if at all. And there are other young men---we have no way of knowing how many---who do not even know they have fathered a child.

Designing policy to change the behavior of this large, heterogenous group of unwed fathers poses special hurdles. It is estimated that less than a quarter of all children born to never-married mothers have their paternity legally established and, in 1987, only 19.7% of never-married mothers had formal child support awards. Some research indicates that unwed fathers have less income available to draw on to pay child support and they are less well educated and much more likely to be unemployed or have low-wage jobs than divorced or separated fathers.

Although no language in the Family Support Act of 1988 specifically refers to out-of-wedlock children or unwed fathers, several provisions do address paternity establishment. In response, states and counties are developing specific practices, procedures and programs to encourage more unwed fathers to be responsible. Indeed some localities had initiated innovative approaches to this population prior to the passage of the Act.

The first section of this briefing report explores the scope, dimensions and nature of the problem to answer the following questions:

---What do we know about the characteristics and behavior of unwed fathers?

---What do we know about the role of the unwed mothers, their respective families and the community?

---What are some of the other factors and barriers that contribute to such low rates of paternity establishment and child support payments?

---What program practices have been found to encourage paternal involvement and responsibility?

In the second section we first discuss the policy goals, conflicting interests and value dilemmas involved in encouraging unwed fathers' responsibility. How best can the interests of the child be balanced with the competing rights and responsibilities of both parents and the interests of the public?

We then outline a continuum of the points of policy and program intervention and briefly identify promising strategies that are emerging at each stage. Within this framework we mention related provisions of the Family Support Act of 1988, especially its paternity establishment provisions. We then describe plans for two multi-site employment and training demonstrations, national in scope, specifically designed to enhance unwed fathers' earning capacity and thereby improve their ability to pay child support. Some of these programs also aim to assist the young fathers in other aspects of parenting.

In conclusion we assess whether there is sufficient evidence to know what strategies and options are likely to be effective and what research needs to be done in the future.

Definition of terms: Reflecting the shift in societal attitudes, children whose parents were not married when they were born are no longer referred to by the pejorative term 'illegitimate.' In this report we use two alternate terms interchangeably, *out-of-wedlock* and *non-marital*.

It is difficult to find an accurate term to identify out-of-wedlock children's parents, since their marital status changes and some categories overlap, as follows:

---Out-of-wedlock children's parents are generally referred to in the literature and in this report as *unwed* or *never-married* but in fact some of them will later marry other partners. In this case they properly belong in the married category even though they have a child fathered/mothered by another man/woman to whom they were not married at the time of birth.

---The term *absent parent,* includes those who are married, separated, divorced and never-married but are not living with with their child. The term *non-residential parent* however may be preferable, since some so-called absent parents are quite a presence in their children's lives, see them regularly and sometimes take care of them.

---The term *non-custodial* parent is often used interchangeably with absent parent in these policy discussions and refers to the fact that their child(ren) do not live with them. But some use the term to make the distinction between divorced and separated fathers who do not have legal custody (non-custodial fathers) and unwed fathers for whom legal custody is rarely an issue.

---The term *single parent family* is commonly used to refer to a single parent *household*. In our view it would be more accurate if the term were reserved for situations when one parent has died.

(From the child's perspective, he or she has two living parents even if they are not married or living together.)

SCOPE AND NATURE OF THE POLICY PROBLEM

(Sources: Aron, Barnow & McNaught, 1989; Bureau of the Census, 1986, '87, '90; Committee on Ways and Means, 1990; Ellwood, 1988; Haskins et. al. 1985; Lerman, 1986 and 1990; Sullivan, 1986 and 1990; Wattenberg, 1987 and forthcoming)

Trends in Out-of-Wedlock Births

The proportion of all births that take place out-of-wedlock has greatly increased in the last two decades. In 1960 only 5.3% and in 1970 only 10.7%, of all registered live births were out-of-wedlock, but by 1986 the proportion had risen to 23.4%. As a corollary, the proportion of births to married women dropped sharply. About one-third of all non-marital births are to women under age 20. Black and Hispanic women are considerably more likely to give birth out-of-wedlock than whites, though this is in part a function of their higher rates of poverty. In 1986 31.6 % of Hispanic births and 61.2% of black births were out-of-wedlock.

The composition of the population of female-headed families has changed dramatically. The number of children with a divorced parent has more than doubled since 1970, but the number with a never-married parent grew by a multiple of 8. In 1979 16.5% of female headed families were never married, in 1988 this proportion had risen to 26.1%.

The major policy concern about these increasing rates of non-marital births arises from the association of unwed parenthood with child poverty and welfare dependency.

- Children who are born out-of-wedlock are at greater risk of being poor for longer periods of time than children born to married parents.

- Children born out-of-wedlock now constitute the majority of children receiving AFDC and are at greatest risk for long-term welfare dependency. In 1969 no marriage tie was the basis for eligibility for 27.9% of child AFDC recipients, but by 1988 this had become 51.9%.

- It is estimated that over 40% of never-married women who enter the AFDC system at age 25 or less with a child less than 3 years old will spend ten years or more on AFDC.

Rates of Paternity Establishment: Data limitations

There is a paucity of empirical research on legal paternity. Without a legally established father, non-marital children are not even eligible for child support. However, no national data is collected on the percentage of out-of-wedlock children who need paternity to be established nor whose paternity is eventually established. There are various factors which explain this gap in data.

First, paternity establishment is not an issue for all children born out-of-wedlock. Some infants die in their first year of life and some become adopted. In some situations the child's parents marry each other later on and proceed to establish paternity themselves in what is usually a simple procedure. There are no numbers available on how many out-of-wedlock children fall into each of these categories nationally and thus we do not know the numbers of children for whom legal paternity needs to be established for the population as a whole. (National data on paternity

collected by the Office of Child Support Enforcement only apply to those cases formally entered into the child support system, referred to as the IV-D system.)

Birth certificates. One source of data about paternity is the birth certificate but this has considerable limitations, in addition to those just cited. In about half of the birth certificates of non-marital children information is provided on the father. However, since laws in a few states, notably California and Pennsylvania, permit the mother to name the unwed father on the certificate without the father's permission, many of these fathers' names on the certificate have no legal validity. (Most states only allow the unwed father's name to be put on the certificate if he and the child's mother sign a notarized affidavit of paternity.)

Paternity establishment estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Lewin/ICF researchers recently reviewed seven national surveys and found that only one contained explicit information on the paternity establishment status of the children, the National Survey of Children. However, in this survey, paternity data was only collected for the 160 children in the third wave of the survey, which was too small a sample for analysis (Aron, Barnow & McNaught, 1989). The Lewin/ICF researchers then selected the 1986 CPS Alimony and Child Support Supplement as the most suitable source since it did contain some indirect information on paternity establishment .

The CPS supplement does not ask a direct question about the paternity status of the children in the households surveyed. Thus, rates of paternity establishment had to be imputed from the unwed mothers' responses about child support awards related to one 'reference' child. When the mother reported there was a support award or agreement reached for this child, legal paternity was assumed. All other situations were assumed not to have paternity adjudicated in this study.

The authors point out that another limitation of this method of estimation is that the CPS survey only collected information on the current marital status of the mother over age 18. Thus, out-of-wedlock children whose mothers may have later married someone other than their father or whose mothers were under 18 were not included.

Within these limitations however the study estimated that just under one quarter of the never-married mothers in the CPS sample have established paternity for the reference child. The paternity establishment rates for all children in the sample households were assumed to be somewhat lower (Aron, Barnow & McNaught, 1989).

This study also identified a number of characteristics associated with lower levels of paternity establishment, namely: being black or Hispanic, not completing high school, having three or more children, having an annual family income below $5,000, not being in the labor force the week of the survey, living in a central city, residing in the west, and being 18 or 19 years of age. A somewhat surprising finding was that there was no significant difference in the level of paternity establishment between mothers who received AFDC benefits at some point in 1985 and those who did not.

Trends in paternity establishment. There is evidence from several sources that the rates of paternity establishment are improving somewhat nationally. In April 1982, only 14.3% of unwed mothers aged 18 and older had court-ordered support awards, by 1988 the same CPS survey reported that 19.7 % have awards (Bureau of the Census, 1985 and 1990). There has been a steady increase in paternity adjudications nationally from 219,000 in 1984 to 336,000 in 1989 (OCSE, 1990).

Nevertheless, there is tremendous variation across states and counties in the numbers of paternities adjudicated. Some small states established more paternities than some large states. For example in 1987, in Utah, a low population state, 1,477 paternities were legally established which was more

than the 1,034 in Texas, a high population state (HHS/OCSE, 1988). Presumably these wide variations reflect, in large part, substantial differences in states' effort and performance.

Rates of child support payments by unwed fathers. Surprisingly, when the unwed mother does have a support award she is somewhat more likely to receive the payment than are divorced or separated mothers. In 1987, 83% of never-married mothers with awards actually received support compared with 78% and 74% respectively of the divorced and separated. While the mean dollar amount paid by the unwed fathers is much less it constitutes a somewhat higher percent of the unwed mother's total income.

Nationally the dollar amounts of child support collected (in current dollars) has risen substantially in recent years, from $6.1 billion in 1981 to $10 billion in 1987 but the average real value of child support awards has decreased. This may in part reflect the fact that the pool of child support payments includes a larger proportion of payments from unwed fathers (Garfinkel and McLanahan, 1990).

Profile of Unwed Fathers
(Sources: Furstenberg and Harris, forthcoming; Lerman, 1986 & 1990; Lerman and Ooms, eds. forthcoming; Lamb, & Elster,1986; Marsiglios, 1989; Parke and Neville, 1987; Sullivan, 1986 & 1990; Wattenberg, 1987; Wattenberg, Brewer & Resnik, forthcoming)

Compared with the amount of information available about unwed mothers, very little is known about the characteristics and economic circumstances of unwed fathers with which to guide policy decisions. There is no national source of data on absent parents: a planned, federally sponsored national survey of absent parents was not launched even though a pilot survey of linked interviews conducted with 547 custodial and non-custodial parents in 1985-86, known as the SOAP study, demonstrated its feasibility (Sonenstein and Calhoun, 1988).

There is only one study which provides information about a nationally representative sample of young unwed fathers---the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Force Behavior of Youth---which has been collecting information on a sample of young men and women aged 14-22 in 1979 who have been interviewed on a yearly basis since then. (In 1988 the survey added a study of the young mothers' children.) This data is supplemented by several smaller local surveys, program data and ethnographic studies to provide a preliminary profile of the characteristics of unwed fathers.

However, there are some serious gaps in what is currently known about unwed fathers. Apart from the NLSY most of these other sources provide samples biased towards fathers who show some interest in their child since the unwed fathers in these samples were usually identified through the mothers. Very little is known about the fathers who have no contact, or only hostile contact, with their child's mother. Also the small scale studies have focused most often on samples of young, urban, black unwed fathers. Very little is known about older, or white unwed fathers and unwed fathers who live in suburban, middle class neighborhoods, or rural areas.

Finally, there is considerable inconsistency between data obtained from non-custodial and from custodial parents. A major limitation of all these studies is that information from the custodial and non-custodial parent is not linked, except for the SOAP pilot study. (This is important because non-custodial parents usually report higher levels of child support and more frequent visits with their child than do the custodial parents.)

A recentl study in Minnesota, funded by the Ford Foundation, conducted face to face interviews with a sample of 200 unmarried mothers age 21 and under receiving AFDC and with the fathers of their out-of-wedlock children. Emerging out of this study will be profiles of avowers and

disavowers of paternity and recommendations for both policy and practice. The results of this study will illustrate the usefulness of linked data to examine the interactive processes that affect decision making about paternity (Wattenberg, *et al.* forthcoming).

Preliminary findings from this study include the following.

--Fewer than 5% of the respondents indicated that the birth of the child was the result of a casual encounter.
--The young parents living arrangements are constantly in flux.
--More than two thirds came from deeply troubled and traumatic family situations from which they had actually run away or wanted to do so.
--The placing of the father's name on the birth certificate had deep significance.
--There was wide divergence in the accounts of the young unmarried parents with respect to the fathers' financial contributions and attachment to the child.

The findings of this small but growing body of information about unwed fathers can not be summarized here. We will simply highlight the data most relevant to unwed father's capacity to be financially responsible, namely their education, income and employment characteristics. We then draw on several descriptive studies to try to understand the processes and factors involved in an unwed fathers' acting responsibly.

Education and training
(Sources: Lerman, 1986 and 1990; Marsiglio, 1989; Sullivan, 1986)

Most unwed fathers are over 20 years of age. Of all non-resident fathers age 22-30 in 1987 about five in ten had never married. A much higher proportion of black non-resident fathers are never-married, nearly 70%. Unwed fatherhood is largely a temporary experience for young white and Hispanic men, but is likely to be a more permanent status for many young blacks. This is one reason why blacks account for over 60% of all young unwed fathers (Lerman, 1990).

Most studies suggest that young unwed fatherhood is associated with lower levels of education but it is not yet possible to disentangle cause and effect. Marsiglio's analysis of the NLSY data found that young fathers are likely to have acquired less education than their peers who did not father a child as a teenager. However, he could not find a clear association between a father's living with his non-maritally conceived child and his school progress and attainment. Many assume that the impact of having a child may be a distracting and destabilizing force on a young man's education. On the other hand, for some it may be a motivating and stabilizing factor. In general, Lerman found that young resident fathers (whether married or unmarried) earn more income than non-resident fathers with the same educational background (1990).

Lerman found that high school drop out rates and unemployment rates were substantially higher among those who became unwed fathers sometime between 1979 and 1984 than among those who did not become unwed fathers. The largest and most consistent education gaps showed up among whites. Whites who became unwed fathers were four times as likely to have been high school drop outs than other young men. They were also more likely to have been involved with drugs and other criminal activities than their white peers who did not become fathers. Black unwed fathers, on the other hand, were not very different from their non-father peers in terms of education, drug use and criminal activity (Lerman, 1986).

Small studies suggest that, apparently due to cultural expectations, Hispanic unwed fathers are more likely to drop out of school, marry and get a job than black or white unwed fathers who were more likely to remain in school and complete their education.

Employment, earnings and family income

Earnings of young adult males have fallen steadily since 1970 both because young adult males are less likely to have jobs, and because wages have fallen in real terms. Young unwed fathers' patterns of employment are characterized by high levels of unemployment and instability. They move in and out of the labor force and frequently work only part-time. Many do not report their income. However, their patterns of employment do not differ markedly, as a group, from other young adult males who are not fathers. In 1986 rates of unemployment for black male teenagers were 39.3% and black young adults were 23.5%, much higher than the corresponding rates for whites (16.3% and 9.2%).

Given this employment pattern it is not surprising that the median income of young unwed absent fathers is very low and considerably lower than the national average. (Nearly all reported income is earned, since young adult non-disabled males, living apart from the mothers of their children, receive few public benefits, although some do receive food stamps.) Nevertheless, the large majority of young unwed fathers live in their parental home or with other relatives (this is especially true of black absent fathers). In this case they generally receive in-kind subsidies from their family and undoubtedly may pool their income and expenses with other household members.

It seems appropriate then to compare their family household income with the family income of the unwed mothers. Analysis of the NLSY data found that, in 1984, family incomes of these fathers living at home averaged $23,000 to $25,000 which is about double the family incomes of the young unwed mothers in the same survey (Lerman & Ooms, 1988). A study in North Carolina of a sample of largely black fathers identified by the child support system, essentially confirmed these findings and added the point that these fathers have little property or savings to fall back on in times of unemployment. Both these studies report higher levels of child support payments than are reported in the CPS data.

The Process of Behaving Responsibly
(Sources:Haskins et al., 1985; Howe, forthcoming; Danzinger, Kastner and Nickel, forthcoming; Leitch & Gonzalez, 1986; Smollar & Ooms, 1988; Sullivan, 1986; Wattenberg, 1987; Wattenberg *et al.* forthcoming)

The components of responsibility. There appears to be broad agreement about what constitutes the minimal obligations of unwed parenthood namely, legally establishing paternity and paying regular child support until the child becomes adult. Marriage used to be considered the responsible course of action but there is now much less agreement that this is a wise and expected course, especially for very young parents. Another view of responsibility emphasizes, in addition to financial responsibility, the personal and moral element, namely that unwed fathers should keep in personal contact with their child and develop a positive relationship with him or her.

Factors that influence responsible behavior. The extent and manner in which an unwed father fulfills his financial and other obligations to his child obviously depends on his own attitudes, values, knowledge and psychological and financial resources. In a recent analysis of links between family responsibilities and job market outcomes Lerman found that while market factors, such as job opportunities and job skills did have an impact on absent fathers' payment of child support, a personal sense of responsibility, perhaps reinforced by particular cultural expectations, also play an important role (1990). Clearly many other individuals influence the degree to which unwed fathers act responsibly towards their child, most specifically the unwed mother herself, and also members of her family, his family and the immediate community.

The unwed mother's attitude towards the unwed father. The unwed mother's cooperation at several stages in the processes is clearly essential and for this reason she retains a

good deal of power in the situation. Usually she will inform her partner that she is pregnant and believes he is the father, she may initiate a paternity or child support proceeding, and may identify him to AFDC and child support enforcement officials. Further, the unwed mother's parents' attitudes about the baby's father can have a powerful influence on her own attitudes and her behavior towards him.

Sometimes the mother (or her family) is ambivalent about, or actively opposes, involving the baby's father in her baby's life in any way. This may be for a number of reasons. Even when the relationship was not a casual one, it may have ended or turned sour, and she may already be involved with another man. The baby may be a result of an incestuous or violent relationship or incident. She and/or her family may be angry at the baby's father, believe he is 'no good', and will bring only trouble. If he became acknowledged as the baby's legal father, they fear he may then assert rights to visit the child and so forth which they would not want. The child is seen to 'belong' exclusively to its mother and her family who assume total responsibility for him or her.

In such situations the young unwed mother will not seek to establish paternity or child support. If she applies for AFDC when she is required to identify the baby's father she will either seek 'good cause' exceptions, claim she does not know the father's whereabouts or use other delaying tactics. Local child support administrators, in a national survey, reported that uncooperative custodial parents was one of the three greatest barriers to paternity establishment (Sonenstein, Holcomb & Seefeldt, 1990).

Where there is conflict between the parents the law supports the father carrying out his responsibilities when she wants him to be responsible, but does little to protect his rights when he wants to be involved and the mother will not cooperate. Indeed the rights of unwed fathers with regard to notice and consultation about pregnancy decision making, and access to their children have not been clearly established except with respect to adoption. In this case, several Supreme Court decisions have affirmed the unwed father's right to notice about his child's impending adoption only in those cases when he has already demonstrated some interest in the child (Howe, forthcoming).

On the other hand, research suggests that often the unwed mother, and her family welcome and indeed encourage the father's active involvement and assistance with his child, but resist making it legal and formal in order to protect the young father, or mother, from what is perceived as a punitive and hostile bureaucratic welfare and child support system.

An ethnographic study of an Hispanic and a black community in New York City found that in the small number of cases studied, typically both young parents and their families would negotiate the kinds of support and assistance the father and his family would provide. The father's paternity was fully acknowledged by the families and community, and often his name was placed on the birth certificate, but the paternity was never legally adjudicated for child support purposes. Contact with the child support system was generally avoided, apparently successfully (Sullivan, 1986). Similar patterns of frequent contact between father and child, and his provision of various types of in-kind support together with mutual cooperation between the parents' families have also been reported in other studies.

Program Barriers. What other factors account for the reluctance to legally establish paternity and request a formal child support order among so many unwed parents? One explanation frequently cited is the lack of incentives for either party to get involved with the formal service system. This includes the mother's worry that the assistance she currently receives from the father and his kin will be alienated once he is pursued by the authorities. Moreover, if she receives AFDC, any child support he pays goes to reimburse AFDC, except for the $50 monthly pass through she is permitted to keep. Financially she may be better off if he continues to help her 'under the table.'

The North Carolina study findings were critical of this assumption since in their sample, involvement of the father with the child support system did not seem to alienate them from assisting their children. In fact these fathers had more contact with their children than any others reported in the literature (Haskins, et al. 1985).

Wattenberg's studies in Minnesota, affirm the importance of the relationship between the two parents in paternity decisions. Her studies also suggest that their ignorance of the law and of the long-run benefits to the child of paternity establishment was perhaps the most salient factor explaining the lack of cooperation of the young parents with paternity and child support proceedings. This ignorance on the part of the young people and their families was underscored by the ignorance, ambivalence and sometimes outright hostility about paternity and child support demonstrated repeatedly in interviews with staff of community social service agencies, AFDC intake workers, hospital and school-based social workers (1987 and forthcoming). Instead of helping the young father fulfill his legal responsibility these program staff either actively or passively discouraged him from doing so.

Reports of teen pregnancy and parenting programs, and of programs designed specifically to reach out to teen fathers make little mention of any attempts to educate the young fathers about their legal responsibilities or help him connect with the authorities, again reflecting program's staff ignorance and ambivalence about their establishing paternity and paying child support (Sander, 1986).

Many advocates and researchers also maintain that the cumbersome, haphazard, confusing, inconsistent, lengthy and punitive tone of many of the practices and procedures involved in establishing legal paternity, child support awards and collection of payments were highly significant barriers to unwed fathers' acting responsibly. Many of the recent reforms at the federal and state level have been designed to overcome these administrative program barriers, as will be discussed later in this report.

Factors that facilitate responsibility. What has been learned about those program and other factors that apparently help to encourage paternal responsibility?

---**Living nearby.** Fathers who live nearby are much more likely to keep in touch and provide help. Frequent visiting is correlated with provision of financial support.

---**Timing of outreach to unwed fathers.** Program staff have found that young fathers seem to be most ready to be involved, and the teen mother is most ready to involve him, late in the pregnancy and right at the time of birth.

---**Male staff and services oriented to fathers needs.** Recruitment of young unwed fathers is often a full time activity. Teen fatherhood programs were successful when they did extensive outreach in the community, employed male staff to do the outreach, involved fathers in prenatal care visits (had him monitor the fetal heart for example) and offered them employment related counseling and referral.

---**Employment.** Having a job, or a steady source of income was clearly associated with financial support to the child and with personal contact. The unwed mothers, and their families, were much more willing to encourage visiting if the father was contributing financially.

In addition, the young unwed fathers were more likely to be involved with their child if they had the support and encouragement of their own parents and friends in the community. In many communities there is strong support for the young fathers who meet their responsibilities in

informal ways, even while they steer clear of formal systems of assistance and disapproval of those who shirk them.

Although these findings are exploratory they are rich in implications for policy and program design and further testing.

POLICY GOALS AND DILEMMAS

(Sources: Mellgren, forthcoming; Ooms and Herendeen, 1988; Monson & McLanahan, forthcoming; Roberts, 1989; Smollar and Ooms, 1988; Sullivan, 1990)

The evolution of child support and paternity policy

Policymakers current concern about unwed fathers has evolved from several strands of research and advocacy. It was originally subsumed under the growing concern about the financial irresponsibility of non-custodial fathers. The first efforts to strengthen child support enforcement in the sixties originated largely from the desire to recoup some of the costs of the AFDC program from separated and divorced fathers. A specific interest in paternity establishment and other policies related to unwed fathers only emerged with the realization of the growing proportion of out-of-wedlock births both in the general and in the AFDC population, and from the growing public concern about teenage pregnancy and parenthood. This concern centered exclusively on teenage women until slowly their male partners began to come into public focus.

The realization dawned that strategies designed for divorced and separated families needed to be re-examined with respect to whether they met the situation and needs of never-married families. In 1986, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, DHHS, in collaboration with the Department of Labor, sponsored an invitational conference which reviewed research, programs and policy dilemmas and options focused on young unwed fathers (Smollar and Ooms, 1988). Organizations in the private sector at the same time were sponsoring meetings and providing technical assistance to programs interested in young unwed fathers' paternity and child support (Kastner & McKillop, 1988).

The original cost savings objective became expanded to viewing improved child support enforcement as an essential part of a multi-pronged strategy to alleviate the poverty and dependency of female-headed families (see Ellwood, 1988). As this policy has evolved a new interest in fathers has emerged, not just as a source of economic support but also as contributing to the psychological wellbeing of their children. A considerable body of evidence has emerged that traces the negative consequences of family disruption and father absence upon children (Garfinkel and McLanahan, 1990; Ooms & Herendeen, 1989). And an increased number of studies focused on the important role of fathers in their children's psychological development (Lamb, & Sagi, 1983). And, partly as a result of the growing interest among adopted adults in their biological parents' origins, there is a new awareness that out-of-wedlock children may also have a desire, if not a right, to know more about their fathers.

Current policy goals. The major objectives of current policy towards unwed fathers can be summarized as follows.

- To improve the economic situation of children living in single-parent households.

- To lift some of the burden of public relief from the shoulders of the government.

- To reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births. Education and information activities about male responsibility together with tightened enforcement of the support laws are viewed also as strategies designed to discourage out-of-wedlock fathering. If young men, it is argued,

understood and valued the responsibilities that accompanied fatherhood, and were aware that society would enforce these responsibilities, they might be more careful to avoid or postpone becoming fathers until they were prepared and able to support them financially.

In addition, some service providers and advocates believe that a desirable program goal is to strengthen the contacts and affectional bonds between children and their fathers in never-married families. There is clearly an emerging policy interest in examining whether the increased paternal contact and involvement that may well result from the Family Support Act and related policies will in fact improve life outcomes for the children (Garfinkle and McLanahan, 1989).

Finally, the awareness that many young absent fathers were themselves in precarious economic situations and had few resources with which to be financially responsible led to an interest in providing employment and training services to them in order to enhance their wage earning capacity.

The benefits of legal paternity to the child

The importance of establishing legal paternity was initially seen as related to the first of these goals although the poor economic circumstances of most young unwed fathers led many to be sceptical of putting government resources into paternity establishment activities. Hence, state and county child support offices clearly gave these cases lower priority since they had so little immediate pay off in terms of increased child support collections. Moreover, there were no federal incentives to states pursue these time consuming and difficult paternity cases.

However, as fathers grow older their income tends to rise. A young unemployed father of today, may become the successful real estate agent of tomorrow. In fact, in Lerman's recent analysis of NLSY data he found that 60.6% of young absent fathers who were poor in 1980 were not poor six years later (1990). Thus, bringing an unwed father into the system initially might well have long run economic payoffs. In addition. other short-run and long-run economic and psychological benefits that accrue to the child from having paternity legally established began to be made explicit. It is important to note that these benefits apply to all out-of-wedlock children of whatever income and background not only those who are involved in the IV-D system. The benefits that are usually cited are the following:

- Legal paternity is the first necessary step towards the payment of child support which, as noted, may be minimal in the short run, but more substantial later on.

- Once paternity is established the child may become eligible for a variety of social security benefits if the father should die or become disabled.

- The child may draw upon some military dependent benefits if the father is employed in the armed services.

- The child may be covered under the father's employer provided health plan. If this plan covers a marital child it must also cover a non-marital child.

- The child may be eligible for dependent's benefits under worker's compensation.

- The child can find out his family medical and genetic history on his father's side which may become critically important to his own or his children's health later on.

- The child has all the rights of inheritance---such as to property, life insurance etc.---just as any other child.

- The child may use his father's name. In addition, once the father's identity is known the child may then have the opportunity at some point to develop a relationship with the father if he is not already known.

Policy Dilemmas. Although there has been broad general support across the political spectrum for increased governmental efforts to enforce child support, policy development along these lines has met with some resistance and debate from several quarters. For example, some feminist advocates and representatives of social service personnel are protective of the unwed mother's right to decide how much contact she wants to have with her baby's father. They are also worried that many current enforcement activities are unnecessarily punitive and adversarial and may drive the father away from contacts with his child

On the other hand, pulling in the opposite direction, father's rights advocates have been heard to insist that all fathers have a right to know that they have fathered a child, and urge that his name should be required to be placed on the birth certificate. A few urge that many unwed fathers have a right to be involved in the decision about an out-of-wedlock pregnancy and be involved in pregnancy decision counseling (Shostak *et. al.*, 1984 and forthcoming). At the same time, father's rights advocates are vociferously opposing many of the new child support guidelines as being unfair to the non-custodial parent, and insisting that visitation rights are accorded along with the collection of child support.

Many believe that the child's interest should be paramount and yet it may often be lost sight of in the struggle between the parents' interests. For example, although the economic interest of the mother and child may coincide in the short run, on other issues they may be quite different. While a mother may decide that it is better for her never to have to see her child's father again, or to have minimal contact with him, the child may benefit from seeing him.

As policymakers and program administrators proceed to implement existing laws and regulations or consider modifying or expanding upon them, these competing and conflicting concerns create many dilemmas. The rights and interests of the child, unwed mothers and fathers and society need to be taken into account and weighed. Some of the questions that need to be wrestled with include:

---Should states require the establishment of paternity for all out-of-wedlock children? How would this requirement be implemented?

---To what extent should custodial mothers be required to have to deal with their child's father? When is it in the best interest of the child not to do so?

---In their eagerness to facilitate increased paternity adjudications, are state laws sufficiently careful to guard the due process rights of men who may have been unjustly named as the father by the unwed mother?

---When employment and training programs specifically target unwed, or non-custodial fathers does this create perverse incentives that further weaken the institution of marriage? Does this take away resources that would otherwise go to assist the unwed mothers?

POINTS OF INTERVENTION: A POLICY CONTINUUM FOR ENCOURAGING UNWED FATHERS TO BE RESPONSIBLE

(Sources: Child Support Technology Transfer Project, 1989; Lerman and Ooms, forthcoming; Roberts, 1989; Smollar and Ooms, 1988; Sullivan, 1990)

From the research findings presented above it is clear that the process of encouraging responsible behavior from unwed fathers consists of a continuum of several possible points of intervention which are related sequentially to each other. Yet current efforts are fragmented and piecemeal. At the community level, many encouraging new approaches are targeted on only one aspect or stage of the process, although they are interrelated and cumulative in their effects. If these efforts are isolated from one another, and do not reinforce each other, the effectiveness of any particular efforts may be reduced.

On Table 1, page 27, we outline this continuum and discuss its various elements below. We identify any FSA provisions specifically relevant to each stage and also briefly describe some of the promising approaches and strategies that are being tried out in different parts of the country. There are many provisions of the Family Support Act that affect unwed parents---such as improvements in the parent locate services, establishing time frames for IV-D services and for distribution of support collections, improving reporting of data and so forth---that are not mentioned below as they are not addressed specifically to issues concerning the non-marital status of the parents.

Points of Intervention

#1 Preparation for Fatherhood

There is growing agreement that young people need to be educated about the responsibilities of parents in general and fathers in particular; about specific laws related to paternal responsibilities and their application to married, divorced, separated, remarried and unmarried fathers; and about the benefits to children, fathers and family life of strong, positive, father-child relationships.

Related Family Support Act Provisions. States are permitted to draw down federal matching funds to use for IV-D related information and publicity campaigns and many IV-D offices have done so. Although most such campaigns have to date targeted parents in need of IV-D services there is no reason why they could not be aimed at a broader audience---teenagers in general, their parents and community leaders, and service providers

Promising Strategies. The initiative for developing innovative strategies is being assumed largely by the private sector, sometimes in collaboration with county child support offices. Some existing strategies include:

- Community awareness poster campaigns and media spots promoting 'male responsibility'. (For example the activities sponsored by the National Urban League and Children's Defense Fund).

- Community consortia of interested agencies and professionals who sponsor the development of curriculum units and other materials on paternity to be incorporated into school's sex and family life education courses and/or into adult workshops promoted in the workplace or community organizations. (For example the Seattle and San Francisco Bay Area consortium activities described in McKillop, Kastner and Perry, 1989.)

#2 Prenatal Care

Information and education needs to be provided to pregnant unwed mothers, their male partners and sometimes, if the expectant parents are young, to their own parents about the benefits of paternity establishment and the laws relating to unwed father's rights and responsibilities.

Related Family Support Act Provisions. There are no provisions in the Act that specifically affect this point of intervention. This is ironic since it is the period at which unwed fathers seem most likely to be interested and willing to be involved with their child. Neverthless, as noted in #1 above, federal matching funds can be used for IV-D information and publicity campaigns which could be targeted to places and professionals involved in providing prenatal care.

Promising Strategies. Although written materials such as pamphlets and flyers can and should be developed specifically for the young parents-to-be and their families, it is equally important to inform and educate the health care and social service professionals with whom they come into contact, usually several times, over the course of the pregnancy. This includes school nurses, and social workers, nurses and physicians in prenatal clinics and community-based health care centers, teen pregnancy programs and private doctors' offices. A campaign to target these service providers should be planned in collaboration with the relevant local or state professional membership associations

Although some communities are undoubtedly carrying out activities like these, none are mentioned in the literature reviewed for this report. However, an important first step is being taken by the acting director of the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Dr. Vincent Hutchins, who together with the director of OCSE is sending copies of the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement's booklet for the public, "Handbook on Child Support Enforcement" to all state maternal and child health directors (OCSE, 1985). In the accompanying letter they urge them to work with state child support agencies in joint efforts to reach unwed mothers in hospitals and other medical settings with information about the benefits of establishing paternity and assistance with the process of doing so. In addition, some preliminary contacts are being made between members of the national network of teen pregnancy and parenting programs and the staff of the Center for the Support of Children.

#3 Birth Registration

The institution at which a birth occurs, or the attending person at a home-based delivery, is required by state law to file a birth certificate for each live birth. This provides an opportunity for the unwed father's name to be placed on the birth certificate. In most states this procedure is entirely voluntary and involves both parent's signing a separate notarized paternity affidavit which is filed with the birth certificate. Several European countries however require paternity establishment for all out-of-wedlock children. Wisconsin recently passed a law to *require* all unwed parents to put the unwed father's name on the birth certificate, but it is unclear how this requirement is being implemented (Munson and McLanahan, forthcoming).

Family-related information reported on the form is minimal, and may be provided by the mother, her spouse or some other appropriate person and there is no state that requires that the unwed father's name be placed on the certificate. Detailed medical information related to the pregnancy, birth and infants status is filled out on the 'long form' section of the certificate and used for state vital statistics reports and research purposes. (States then, on a voluntary basis, forward much of this medical information to the federal Office of Vital Statistics.)

Related Family Support Act provisions. The Family Support Act, in a little noticed provision, requires that states collect the social security numbers of both parents as part of the process of issuing birth certificates. Exceptions can be made in special circumstances (such as an immigrant who does not have such a number). The numbers must not appear on the birth certificates and can only be used by the IV-D program. This provision is designed to apply to all fathers, married or not, however it is not clear how and whether a state can require the social security number of an unwed father until paternity has been formally established. (The purpose of this provision is

related to helping locate absent parents, since apparently many single mothers do not know the social security number of their child's father.)

This new requirement is causing a good deal of controversy and confusion. It is quite unclear, for example, what sanctions could be applied to parents who do not cooperate whether and how a state can collect the social security number of an unwed father before paternity is established. Frederick King, the President of the National Association for State Vital Records and Health Statistics, said that states are having real problems with what in their view is a poorly conceived provision and they are still planning how to carry it out. However, states will undoubtedly find ways to cooperate with this requirement in due course. In King's view it creates a very dangerous precedent as the collection of vital statistics has always been considered a function of state governments (telephone communication).

Promising Strategies

Some localities have decided to make an intensive effort to establish paternity around the time of the out-of-wedlock child's birth. In some situations an agent of the IV-D office attempts to meet with the mother and putative father in the hospital to initiate the paternity adjudication process.

The most ambitious and successful of these efforts was launched statewide in Washington state in 1988. The Paternity Affidavit Project was an outgrowth of the recommendations of two appointed Governor's bodies, a commission on accountability and efficiency in government and the other a task force on child support enforcement. These independently came to the conclusion that the paternity establishment process must be made more efficient, more cost effective, less formal and more timely. A newly enacted law requires, in the case of an out-of-wedlock birth, "that the physician, midwife or their agent must provide an opportunity for parents to sign the paternity affidavit." The process is entirely voluntary. And if the father signs and then changes his mind later, he can ask for a blood/genetic test at any time (Child Support Report, Sept. 1990).

The State Office of Child Support supplies the hospitals with two informational brochures, one to give to each parent, detailing their parental rights and responsibilities; it has provided some training to birth records clerks and other medical personnel across the state; and reimburses the hospitals $20 towards the cost of each filed affidavit.

Initial results are very encouraging. In 1987, 1800 paternity affidavits were signed, in 1988, 2200 but in 1989, only one year after the project began, 5100 affidavits were signed (out of 14,000 out-of-wedlock births.) The other positive result is that the length of time between filing the affidavit to establishing a support award has been greatly reduced. In Washington it used to take between 1-3 years from the date of the child's birth, to the issuance of a support order, it is now taking, on average, only 95 days (telephone communication).

It should be noted that Washington state has at the same time also launched a number of community education and outreach projects including the Seattle Consortium noted above.

#4. Paternity Adjudication Process

(Sources: CSTTP, 1989; Sonenstein, Holcomb & Seefeldt, 1990; Roberts, 1989)

If the father's name is not placed on the birth certificate at birth, the mother can always get her own lawyer to pursue paternity later on. However, if she applies for help from the government there are two ways in which this process may be triggered. First, a mother may apply independently to the Title IV-D office for their help in locating the absent father, in establishing paternity and obtaining a court order for support. (It is still not well known that IV-D services are available for a small fee to the general public.)

Alternatively, when an unwed mother applies for AFDC, she is required to identify the father and cooperate in locating his whereabouts. In this case the IV-D Office of Child Support Enforcement receives a referral for them to initiate the paternity process.

For a number of years state and local systems for establishing paternity have come under severe criticism for their inefficiency, ineffectiveness and perceived punitiveness. A recent survey of local paternity practices provides a vivid illustration of some of the structural factors that contribute to the lackluster performance of many of these systems (Sonenstein, Holcomb and Seefeldt, 1990).

There is definitely a movement underway to reform many of the features which have drawn complaints. Nevertheless, the survey found a great deal of variation between states in the basic administration of the program, authority for which is general divided in different ways between three separate agencies located in at least two branches of government---the welfare, AFDC office, the child support agency (often, but not always, located administratively together in the state human services department although seldom co-located in the same building) and various divisions of the court. Most commonly the IV-D programs contract out the paternity establishment functions to some kind of legal agency, which is partly what contributed in many jurisdictions to creating an adversarial overtone to the entire process.

The study's authors comment that successful paternity establishment requires the complex interconnection of actions across a number of agencies, and at each transfer point there is a chance for the case to become lost or delayed or hang in limbo with nobody knowing who is responsible. (Sonenstein, *et al.* 1990). In addition, states have had no fiscal incentives to give these cases anything other than the lowest priority.

Related provisions of the Family Support Act. For the first time, federal law has shown evidence of getting serious about paternity establishment. A number of provisions to states provided both carrots and sticks designed to remedy some of the problems just outlined above. These included:

- The federal reimbursement rate for the costs of genetic tests in contested cases is increased to 90% ("the carrot"). All parties to contested suits must submit to genetic tests.

- By October 1, 1991, each state is required to meet certain performance standards for paternity establishment, and these standards are expressed in terms of specific numeric goals based on three different formulas ("the stick").

- AFDC recipients must be informed by the IV-D agency of the benefits of establishing paternity.

- All states which have not already done so are exhorted to implement simple procedures for establishing paternity in noncontested cases and to have civil procedures available for handling contested cases.

- Federal regulations set time frames within which states IV-D agencies must respond to requests for paternity services. The IV-D agency must file for paternity establishment or complete service of process to establish paternity within 90 calendar days from the date of locating the alleged father; and paternity must be established or the alleged father excluded as a result of genetic tests and/or legal process within one year of the successful service of process or the child reaching 6 months of age.

Promising Strategies

A number of states and localities have clearly instituted more efficient management procedures and moved to expedite, simplify and decriminalize the process of establishing paternity. The success of these efforts is reflected in the steady increase in paternity adjudications already notes. However, the extreme variations between states and localities which persist are still troubling.

There have been several studies of states' paternity establishment performance which identify promising practices, including one by the HHS Office of the Inspector General. The report of this study concluded that while the most frequent key improvements made in sites' procedures included improved case processing and management and streamlining of case adjudication, "top management commitment was the most-reported paternity establishment effectiveness factor" (OIG, 1990, p. 4).

The Center for the Support of Children, which operates the Child Support Technology Transfer Project under contratc with the U.S. OCSE, has outlined the key elements of a model using a simplified, four stage process for achieving consent to paternity built upon the best practices they observed in providing technical assistance to six state IV-D offices. At each stage of this process paternity may be acknowledged and a support order obtained. Only if the process reaches the fourth stage is a court appearance involved (Child Support Technology Transfer Project, 1989). Localities which have implemented these kinds of processes report much higher percentages of voluntary consents and fewer appearances in court. In many states and localities, if both parents are in agreement the consent order and support award can be issued in a notarized agreement on the same day. In some states however, if either parent is a minor, the process becomes more complicated as a guardian has to be appointed and involved.

In contested cases, localities are also instituting simplified, civil procedures while safeguarding the non-custodial parents' rights, which often include on-site, same day genetic testing (for example in Prince George's County, MD and in Washington, D.C.).

#5 Child support awards and collection
(Sources: Danzinger, Kastner & Nickel forthcoming; Pirog-Good, forthcoming; Roberts, 1989; Smollar and Ooms, 1988)

The process of obtaining a support order also varies from state to state. In some it is issued by judges or quasi-judicial officers, in others an administrative agency will set the amount. Until recently the amount was left to the discretion of the person who set the award and amounts varied greatly even for families in similar circumstances. The 1984 Child Support Amendments required all states to adopt guidelines for setting child support awards, but they did not have to be binding.

A major problem in setting the award in cases where the parents had never been married was that so often the father was found to be unemployed or in a low-wage job. Thus, often the case was dismissed, no award was established and no payments were made. Advocates and others have suggested that once a case gets to this stage, it is important that some kind of token award be set even if only a dollar or two a week, to establish the pattern of obligation (See Smollar and Ooms, 1986; Danzinger *et al.* forthcoming). The advantage of this strategy is that it would demonstrate official recognition and reward for informal community practices.

States make no written distinction between minors, teenagers and older adult unwed and non-custodial fathers in enforcement practices. In some states the support orders of young men are enforced with automatic income withholding, the interception of income tax refunds, property liens, credit bureau reporting and, when in contempt of court, jail. In many state and localities, in

practice however, teenage fathers are not typically prosecuted, and in others they are not liable for support (Pirog-Good, forthcoming).

Related Family Support Act provisions. The 1988 Act strengthened the requirements of the 1984 reform by requiring that the state guidelines be used as a rebuttable presumption of the correct amount. In addition the state must review these guidelines at least once every four years. There is no mention in the Act of guidelines that would be especially tailored to meet the needs of young unwed fathers such as token awards or credit given for in-kind assistance. Judges however would have discretion to rebut the presumptive guidelines in special circumstances when they believe the guidelines suggested are not appropriate in an individual case, and provide the reasons in writing.

By October 1993, the state must automatically review and adjust under the guidelines, all award orders for AFDC cases and, at the request of the parents for non-AFDC cases, at least once every three years. However, the procedures for modifying support awards remain somewhat unclear. This is an important issue for never-married cases since research suggests that within a few years, most young absent fathers moved out of poverty (Lerman, 1990). This may be another argument for setting token awards. It is hard to readjust a support order when one was never established in the first place.

One of the most radical reforms of the new legislation was its requirement that all new support orders be collected through automatic wage withholding unless both parties agree to an alternate agreement or there is a finding of good cause for not doing so. This provision is being phased in and applied to cases handled by the state IV-D agency as of November 1, 1990, and to all non- IV-D cases by January 1, 1994. There are no discussions in the literature about how these provisions will affect unwed fathers specifically. One can speculate however, that to the extent that their employment is part-time, unstable and may be 'under the counter'---which many studies suggest is the case for the young unwed father---wage withholding will be difficult to implement. However, the regulations provide for these cases to be reviewed periodically.

Promising Strategies

One program, said to be unique in the country, the Teen Alternative Parenting Program (TAPP) in Indianapolis, has developed an innovative strategy and set of services specifically designed to improve long run child support compliance among young fathers. Set up in 1986 in collaboration with the local child support office, the program encourages the teen participants to pay part, or all of their weekly child support obligation (typically set as the minimum of $25 a week) through "in-kind" payments. These consist of credits given for maintaining a regular visitation schedule for his child, babysitting, continuing school or pursuing GED and participating in parenting classes or vocational training classes. Program staff work with the young fathers to become involved in various education, training and job search activities. A major goal of the program is to change the nature of the relationship between the child support system and unwed fathers from a stance which is perceived as adversarial to one that is supportive and facilitative.

Initial results from a preliminary evaluation study of the project suggest that when the value of "in-kind" contributions are included, those participating in the TAPP program outperform the comparison group in reimbursing AFDC. These results are tentative since the numbers of participants were small and it was difficult to get a valid comparison group of young fathers who did not enter the program . Moreover, the desired long-run outcomes cannot yet be assessed. Nevertheless, the program appears to be a low-cost alternative to traditional approaches which has considerable promise (Pirog-Good, forthcoming).

Some states have established guidelines to require a minimum support order so that however poor the father is, he is expected to contribute a minimal amount. And there is nothing in the FSA to prevent a state from developing guidelines legislation which would take into account certain special

circumstances such as those of a young unwed father and permit token awards or "credit" systems such as implemented in the TAPP demonstration program.

#6 Enhancing Income through JOBS-type programs
(Sources: Lerman and Ooms, 1988; MDRC, 1990; Ooms & Herendeen, 1988; P/PV, 1990)

It has often been observed that a major reason for unwed father's failure to pay child support , or to be interested in establishing paternity, is that as a group they are generally poorly educated, lack job skills and earn little or no regular income. What jobs they can get are usually low paying. Thus, there has been considerable interest expressed in enhancing these fathers long-run ability to pay child support through enrolling them in job training, education and employment related programs. In the past, youth employment and training programs have not specifically targeted fathers. Indeed most did not even collect any data on the participants' family responsibilities.

Relevant Family Support Act provisions. The original Senate bill, Title I which established the JOBS program included a provision which would have permitted states to offer JOBS services to the non-resident fathers of AFDC children. In the conference negotiations this provision was deleted in part because there was insufficient evidence documenting the benefits of these programs for non-resident fathers. (There was evidence of the benefits of work/welfare programs for AFDC mothers.) Thus, as a substitute, the final Act included a provision that instructs the Secretary of HHS to issue waivers to up to five states, allowing them to provide services under the JOBS program to "non-custodial parents who are unemployed and unable to meet their child support obligations." These demonstrations must be formally evaluated.

Promising Strategies

Across the country a number of localities have begun to plan and conduct pilot employment and training programs targeted on non-custodial fathers. Initially they have faced considerable problems with recruitment and motivation especially for the young unwed fathers. Two over arching demonstration projects, national in scope, are infusing new monies and ideas into some of these efforts and will contribute considerably to the knowledge of what works for this population. The MDRC project is specifically related to implementation of the Family Support Act, the Public/Private Ventures project is not, but the lessons learned in this project will be highly relevant for welfare reform. These two ambitious projects are working together to assure that their efforts are complementary.

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration. To date (11/90) the RFP for this five site demonstration has not yet been issued by the Family Support Administration. However, with private funds from the Pew Charitable Trust and the Ford Foundation and, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Labor, the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) has already launched the initial stages of the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration. Its first step has been to conduct some exploratory activities to help in the design of program models for these proposed demonstrations. MDRC will also conduct the required evaluation of these demonstrations.

In its initial planning effort, MDRC identified a number of localities who have been experimenting with similar approaches and held an exploratory meeting in June 1990 with representatives from these sites, child support enforcement officials, researchers and others to review and discuss the goals, design options and experiences to date.

Among the issues discussed at this meeting were the following.

---The group of fathers potentially eligible for such programs is very diverse and includes men who have the ability to pay, but do not; men who pay but do so 'under the table;' and men who are unemployed and without income. It includes divorced, separated and never married fathers and fathers of all ages. This raises many questions about which type of fathers should be targeted and what kinds of services does each of these sub-groups need etc.

---Two basic design strategies emerge , the "stick" and the "carrot." In some programs participation is required, or offered as an alternative to jail, by the courts or IV-D office for non-compliant fathers. In other programs participation is on a voluntary basis and offered to fathers who are willing but unable to pay support. Recruitment is achieved by reaching out into the community, referrals from the OCSE, and other agencies.

---A wide range of services can, and have been offered, including many services related to the participants' parent status that are not provided by traditional employment and training programs. to men (but sometimes have been in programs designed for mothers). These include parenting classes, services related to paternity and child support, mediation and counseling services (in situations of conflict between the parents over visitation or other issues), parenting education programs and alcohol and other drug counseling, and treatment referral services.

---Many agencies and individuals need to collaborate effectively across traditional program and professional boundaries to make such programs work.

MDRC has also held three focus group discussions with unwed and noncustodial fathers to solicit their views on the design of possible programs. Finally, MDRC staff are working with consultants who are preparing background papers on the labor market experience of low income unwed and noncustodial fathers, administrative practices in child support enforcement which could affect implementation of programs for fathers, and the incentives mothers and fathers face under the public assistance and child support enforcement systems.

The Young Unwed Fathers' Demonstration Project

Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) is launching a six site, community-based, pilot project designed to learn how to reach young unwed fathers and enable them to move towards responsible adulthood and parenthood. It is based on two years of study into the problems of these young fathers and of the experience of programs that have been working with them. The project has received substantial initial funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation. The demonstration's target population is fathers and expectant fathers between the ages of 16 and 25 who are unemployed and eligible for JTPA services.

As a result of the activities conducted in its first planning phase in 1989-90, P/PV staff selected six sites from a total of 17 original proposals submitted by community organizations. The sites represent considerably regional and geographic diversity. Each site will receive $50,000 in seed money but the bulk of the operating funds will come from local public and private resources. Each site must serve a minimum of 50 young men over an 18 month period.

Each site plan meets certain core requirements which include services that provide:

---access for young fathers to employment and training activities that lead to "good" jobs at high wages;
---involvement in classes, mentoring and other activities built upon a particular fatherhood/parenting curriculum developed by P/PV;

---work with young fathers to declare paternity and pay child support;
---continue contact with the young fathers over an 18 month period, including after they are employed;
---ongoing counseling and other supportive services including legal assistance, referrals for health care etc.

In addition, the six pilot sites have considerable flexibility to test a variety of services and recruitment strategies. For example, two sites will take participants whose participation has been mandated by the IV-D agency and the courts, the others will get referrals from a variety of sources whose participation is voluntary.

P/PV staff will provide technical assistance to the sites and design and conduct the evaluation which will include an outcome and implementation study, cost and funding analysis, and an ethnographic study. It was felt that the demonstration's exploratory nature precluded an impact study. However at the end of this pilot, P/PV expects to design a program model based on what has been learned and move to a larger impact demonstration using a random design approach.

The sites chosen are: Pinellas Private Industry Council, Clearwater, Florida; Cleveland Works, Cleveland, Ohio; Fresno Private Industry Council, Fresno, California; Friends of the Family, Annapolis, Maryland; Goodwill Industries, Racine, Wisconsin; Philadelphia Children's Network, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR RESEARCH AND DEBATE

The implementation of the Family Support Act provides an excellent opportunity to develop some research and evaluation activities to answer a number of compelling questions about the impact and cost effectiveness of these system reforms on paternity rates and child support payments. In addition many are suggesting that the effects of these activities on the relationships between the father and child, and on relationships between the parents and the child's wellbeing also need to be studied (Garfinkle and McLanahan, 1989).

Given the serious gaps and inadequacy of the information available on absent parents many believe that the decision to cancel the planned, DHHS-sponsored Absent Parent survey should urgently be reconsidered. In addition, it is important that improvements in the current data collection activities be made, such as those being suggested for the CPS Alimony and Child Support survey in the recent Lewin/ICF study attempting to estimate paternity rates (Aron, *et al.*, 1989).

In addition, a review of the various stages and points of intervention presented in this report suggests several broader questions about the assumptions, focus and direction of current policy need to be debated and discussed.

At present, most of the demonstration and evaluation money is being invested into the end stage of the continuum of responsibility, namely the employment and training programs for non-custodial fathers. Two questions need to be raised. First, clearly these programs are an important investment in human capital. But their success in recruiting and retaining the unwed fathers depends largely on whether paternity has been established and on the parents' attitude to the father's involvement. However, research suggests that the willingness of both unwed parents to father's involvement is greatest around the time of birth Second, each point of intervention is related to the next. Success at one point makes the next stage much easier to accomplish. This suggests that more attention should be paid to the earlier stages of the process and to coordinate efforts across stages. Policymakers at federal and state level should consider the following.

- *Targeting increased resources on broad community education, prenatal care and hospital-based strategies which, the Washington state experience suggests, may have a considerable pay off in terms of increased numbers of voluntary paternity adjudications at or near the birth of the child.*

- *Saturating some communities, or states, with an across systems effort that targets each stage simultaneously. For example, new employment and demonstration programs should be coordinated with intensive community educational outreach and programs that work with health care and social service personnel to reach young people, in general and expectant and new unwed parents.*

Finally, many of the principles underlying the recent discussion and policy reforms are based on the assumption that it would be better for nearly all children born out-of-wedlock to have paternity legally established, yet the law only requires it for AFDC children. Other children may benefit from current policy only if their mothers agree with this goal and take the initiative to achieve it. There are historical reasons for this situation related to policymakers initial interest in child support reform emanating simply from a desire to cut welfare budgets. The resulting two-tier system suggests a double standard that may not reflect the current intention or judgments of policymakers or the public. The current system in effect means that "the privacy issue disproportionately affects poor women and women of color," (Munson & McLanahan, forthcoming).

- *Policymakers and advocates should initiate a debate on whether the goals of current paternity and child support policy should be universalized to apply to the entire population. This debate should identify both positive and negative aspects of such a policy and ways in which it might be implemented.*

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Points of Intervention: A Policy Continuum for Encouraging Unwed Fathers to be Responsible

	#1 Preparation for Fatherhood	#2 Prenatal Care	#3 Birth Registration	#4 Paternity Adjudication Process	#5 Support Awards and Collection	#6 JOBS-type Programs
POINTS OF INTERVENTION	• Education and information about responsibilities and benefits of fatherhood provided to youth prior to becoming expectant parents.	• Information and education to expectant parents and their families about benefits of paternity establishment, child support and related laws and programs.	• Most states have laws providing voluntary procedures in hospitals to place unwed father's name on birth certificate.	• Unwed mother applies for IV-D office assistance in locating father, establishing paternity and obtaining support order. • Unwed mother applies for AFDC, is required to identify putative father and cooperate in the adjudication process ("good cause" exceptions).	• Procedures for establishing awards and collecting support make no distinction based on age or maturity or marital status. In practice many IV-D agencies do not set awards for young`unemployed, poor fathers nor do they prosecute them.	• Growing interest in improving non-residential fathers' earning capacity and ability to pay child support through participation in training and employment programs specifically targeted to fathers.
RELATED FAMILY SUPPORT ACT PROVISIONS	• IV-D offices can draw on federal matching funds for information and publicity activities.	• None specifically. Option available for IV-D educational outreach to prenatal care providers and teen pregnancy programs.	• FSA requires that states collect social security numbers of both parents (married or unmarried) at birth.	• All parties in contested cases must submit to genetic tests. • Federal reimbursment rate for genetic tests raised to 90%. • States required to meet specific numeric goals for paternity establishment by 10/1/1991 • AFDC recipients must be informed by IV-D agency of benefits of establishing paternity. • All states exhorted to implement simplified procedures in non-contested cases and procedures for handling contested cases. • Time frame set for adjudicating paternity.	• State support award guidelines must be used as a rebuttable presumption. FSA does not address the issue of awards for unwed fathers with no or low income. However, judges may at their discretion rebut the presumption when they believe they are not appropriate to a case.	• Secretary of HHS must issue waivers to up to five states allowing them to provide JOBS services to unemployed non-custodial parents, unable to meet their child support obligations.
PROMISING STRATEGIES	• Community awareness, poster campaigns, and media spots stressing "male responsibility". • Fatherhood curriculum units developed for school/community based sex and family life education courses and programs.	• Initial outreach to inform and provide educational material to maternal and child health staff and teen pregnancy programs.	• IV-D agencies conduct outreach to hospitals. • State law requires that parents be provided the opportunity to voluntarily place unwed father's name on birth certificate at time of birth registration.	• Simplified, administrative, voluntary consent procedures allowing prompt (same day) support orders. • In contested cases, on-site same-day genetic testing and other expedited court procedures.	• "Token" awards or support "credit " for in-kind services are established by court order for young, unwed, unemployed or poor fathers. These credits may include enrollment and attendance at education and training programs.	• Pilot programs offer variety of education, training, and parenting related services. Participation is either (i) required by the courts for non-compliant fathers, (ii) on a voluntary basis. Some programs focus specifically on young unwed fathers.

TABLE 1